



USDA ANNOUNCES OAK DISEASE DETECTION PROGRAM FOR CALIFORNIA NURSERIES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service today announced that it is regulating the interstate movement of *Phytophthora ramorum* host and associated host plants from all California nurseries. Regulating *P. ramorum*, or sudden oak death, is part of the APHIS detection and management program. Since it first appeared in coastal California in 1995, the disease is known to affect 59 different host and associate host species.

Beginning Monday, March 29, 2004, California nursery owners who want to ship listed plants must undergo a nursery stock inspection before those plants can be transported across state lines.

Currently, 12 California counties are regulated for the disease that infects and destroys oak and tanoak trees. The new measure prohibits an estimated 1,500 California nurseries from shipping plants susceptible to *P. ramorum* until those nurseries can be inspected and found free of the pathogen. USDA will also launch a national survey to determine if *P. ramorum* is causing disease symptoms on hosts and associated hosts in other parts of the country. States receiving nursery stock from California plan to increase inspection activities as an added safeguarding measure.

Earlier this month, during a California Department of Food and Agriculture Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey, state plant health and pest prevention officials confirmed the presence of *P. ramorum* on several varieties of camellia plants at a wholesale horticultural nursery in Los Angeles County and at a nursery in San Diego County. The disease find in southern California prompted APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine division to take new actions to manage the disease.

State and federal officials have obtained shipping documents from both nurseries and trace-back and trace-forward surveys are being conducted to determine the extent of host material and disease distribution. For more information, visit the APHIS Web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/sod/sod.html>, or call the APHIS Sudden Oak Death hotline at 1-888-703-4457.